

MINUTES

MONTANA SENATE 58th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK AND IRRIGATION

Call to Order: By **CHAIRMAN KEITH BALES**, on February 3, 2003 at 3 P.M., in Room 422 Capitol.

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Sen. Keith Bales, Chairman (R)
Sen. Dale Mahlum, Vice Chairman (R)
Sen. Sam Kitzenberg (R)
Sen. Linda Nelson (D)
Sen. Gerald Pease (D)
Sen. Corey Stapleton (R)
Sen. Mike Taylor (R)
Sen. Joseph (Joe) Tropila (D)

Members Excused: Sen. Ken (Kim) Hansen (D)
Sen. Walter McNutt (R)

Members Absent: None.

Staff Present: Jennifer Stephens, Committee Secretary
Doug Sternberg, Legislative Branch

Please Note. These are summary minutes. Testimony and discussion are paraphrased and condensed.

Committee Business Summary:

Hearing & Date Posted: HB 128, 1/23/2003
Executive Action: HB 128

HEARING ON HB 128

Sponsor: REP. DIANE RICE, HD 33, HARRISON

Proponents: Will Kissinger, MT Department of Agriculture
Barbara Broberg, Women Involved in Farm Economics,
(WIFE)
Bob Gilbert, Rosebud County
Nancy Schlepp, Montana Farm Bureau
Doug Kaercher, Hill County Commissioner
John Semple, MT Cattle Women, Association of MT
Aerial Applicators
John Bloomquist, Montana Stock Growers Association
Gary Amestoy, Richland County Economic Development
Corporation
Doug Johnson, Cascade County

Opponents: Mike Fellows, Missoula

Opening Statement by Sponsor:

REP. DIANE RICE, HD 33, HARRISON, provided written testimony,
EXHIBIT (ags23a01) .

Proponents' Testimony:

Will Kissinger, MT Department of Agriculture, said HB 128 is a very important bill. He explained that it is very difficult for local counties to control their weeds. The fund created by HB 128 would help this problem.

Barbara Broberg, Women Involved in Farm Economics, (WIFE), said as a farmer, she is well aware of the weed problems in Montana. She urged the committee to pass HB 128.

Bob Gilbert, Rosebud County, said he has been involved in weed fighting all of his life. He also said it is not near enough money to solve the problem, but he thinks it's a good start. He supports HB 128.

Nancy Schlepp, Montana Farm Bureau, said she could recall as a child all of the work she used to do to control the weeds on her family farm. She said that enough couldn't be done to try to control noxious weeds. She stands in full support of HB 128.

Doug Kaercher, Hill County Commissioner, said we are slowly losing the war on weeds. He thinks HB 128 will help fund the effort to get rid of noxious weeds.

John Semple, MT Cattle Women, Association of MT Aerial Applicators, wholeheartedly supports HB 128.

John Bloomquist, Montana Stock Growers Association, supported the measure and was anxious to find funds to contribute to the trust.

Gary Amestoy, Richland County Economic Development Corporation, said the trust is important to supply money for prevention, control, education, and further research. He encouraged support for the bill.

SEN. JOSEPH TROPILA rose to speak for **Doug Johnson, Cascade County**, who wanted to go on record as supporting HB 128.

Opponents' Testimony:

Mike Fellows, Missoula, filled out a witness statement, **EXHIBIT**(ags23a02).

Questions from Committee Members and Responses:

SEN. LINDA NELSON asked where the \$10 million for the trust fund would come from. **REP. RICE** explained that there was already \$4.76 million in the existing trust fund. She said money also comes from other sources, such as the coal trust fund and vehicle registration taxes. **SEN. NELSON** asked if the trust fund would have to reach the full \$10 million cap before it could be drawn from. **REP. RICE** said yes. **SEN. NELSON** asked **REP. RICE** to explain the soft cap. **REP. RICE** explained that once the cap was met, any monies received over that amount could be appropriated by a majority vote.

SEN. COREY STAPLETON asked why the wording on the ballot would read "for creating a noxious weed management trust fund or against it". **REP. RICE** explained that it is not in the constitution. That is why the bill would be constitutionally recreating what already exists. She also explained that it was the same wording the coal trust fund used. **SEN. STAPLETON** asked if there would be clarification on the ballot. **REP. RICE** said she didn't know what the secretary of state would write in the voter guide.

SEN. DALE MAHLUM asked if the money could be used in all types of weed eradication. **REP. RICE** said there was a variety of weed

irradiation methods being researched but spraying seemed to be the most common. **SEN. MAHLUM** said he represents a number of constituents who are opposed to herbicides. He asked if he could make sure his county wheat board was directed to spray along the sides of the roads. **REP. RICE** agreed that they should be in charge of that.

Closing by Sponsor:

REP. RICE said the only concern about the bill would be whether there was enough money, but she reminded the committee that keeping the \$10 million cap would allow for them to make use of the money faster. She closed HB 128.

EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 128

Motion/Vote: **SEN. TAYLOR** moved that **HB 128 BE CONCURRED IN.**
Motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 3:45 P.M.

SEN. KEITH BALES, Chairman

JENNIFER STEPHENS, Secretary

KB/JS

EXHIBIT (ags23aad)